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A MISSION EXODUS

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Author of
"How to Begin to Live Forever"

A

MISSION EXODUS

BY

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By Joseph Merlin Hodson

To : —

The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor,

The Epworth League,

The Westminster League,

The Brotherhood of St. Andrew,

and all kindred organized Societies.

A MISSION EXODUS.

"THE Evangelization of the world in this generation!"—Why not?

It must be done. There is inspiration in *that* fortunate rally sentence. Elections are won, and the course of nations changed by catch phrases and pithy epigrams; the tardy work of winning this world for our patient King should be accomplished by the use of every good stratagem. Why not a Mission Exodus as decided, well defined and desperate as the march of the Children of Israel to Canaan; but carrying with it the spirit,

the intelligence, and the genius for organization of the Nineteenth Century.

There was a time when the people of that great historical movement were caught in a defile of the mountains. They could not climb the steep heights upon either side, the sea was before them, and behind them the fury of Pharaoh. They were a lot of poor slaves, who had been whipped and dogged all their life. They were a flock of sheep, a huddle of two or three million helpless men, women and children, apparently forced to their death, by a disciplined army following in upon them. They knew the fatal rush of the famous Egyptian horses, the skill and daring of the world renowned charioteers, the precision of the spearmen and bowmen ; but they had

not sufficient imagination to see the *faith road* that led quickly to Canaan. We now easily see it. They had a command and a promise; we have a command, a promise, imagination, and history. When God commands He sees. What He sees and commands is for those who believe in Him a faith road, and it always leads to His Canaan.

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Has not the Christian Church long suffered the confusion of Moses? "Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the Children of Israel that they go forward." Do we not utterly exhaust ourselves in crying to God? We pray with strong sentences, and splendid rhet-

oric. We sing hymns that would do for the angels, but we are huddling in our churches and dying. What a force of knowledge is dammed back, and held in check among the young people, and how it would bless and be itself blest if we could open the channels and let it flow! There is more than knowledge; there is tremendous spiritual energy, that wastes as the munitions of war disintegrate and weaken when held stored by the armed nations of the world. Why should logicians not draw the cold, clear, but tragic conclusion, that the infinite sacrifice of our Saviour in this world is largely wasted? Black night yet hangs over more than half the religious sky. Sometimes it takes the form of a thunder cloud shadowing and threatening us with its

ominous pall. When the facts of the heathen would rush in upon the mind, our heart sinks down, and there comes a sense of so much undone that one cannot help feeling himself a partner in a great wrong.

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May the Lord match this quick rushing age — this age of electricity — this age of newspapers that have the lightning in them — this age of inventions — this age of all kinds of possibilities that dance before the imagination like fairies fascinating us with their promise of coming into sight. May the Lord match this mighty age, and give the world a man who can organize and lead it for Christ as it is now led

for business and the devil. A man is needed so thoroughly alive with zeal that society cannot pick him up, make him the fashion and pet him into weakness,—a man out, and out aflame with one burning idea, who can never be caught and quenched—a man who cannot be overcome, but will himself overcome in Christ, and make the world think God's way.

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May the Lord send the world a Moses, meek but able to lead,—a Peter the Hermit, half crazy if necessary, but able to turn the world into a Mission Crusade,—a Martin Luther, stubbornly, immovably set in the right,—a John Wesley who so long as present in

the Spirit didn't care where he was in the body, — a Joan of Arc, if a woman will do, — a General Booth, if he can do it, — possibly an A. T. Pierson — anybody who has the prophets' eye, can live on his food, and is not afraid of either the kings of nations or of finance. The whole world needs the authority of God and His power in a man. May this little book use its opportunity and become a great "Want" advertisement, for a man of gigantic faith and courage to organize the world for Missions!

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Wanted the sanctified conception of the men who build railroads across continents, and quickly belt the whole world with a line of traffic.

Wanted, not for a denomination but for Missions, the far-seeing ability of the men who formed the Standard Oil Trust.

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Wanted the careful calculation of the men who can sit down in an office and lay out a scheme by which all lines of telegraph shall be purchased and bound together; so that messages can be sent for many times less money and yet made to yield millions of profit each year to the purchaser.

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Wanted an unflinching Von Moltke to methodically plan the details of a campaign

straight to the Paris of Satan, and a diplomatic Bismarck to furnish the resources.

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There is need of some such ability as this laid upon God's altar, and it must be good, it must be honest. Possibly we do not want the method, but we want the conception, the daring consecrated, the ability to organize and lead sanctified. We want men accustomed to handle large sums of money, and vast concerns willing to do it for God, and able to get enthusiasm and pleasure out of doing it in that way.

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Then there may come another 1858. How the world moved forward that year! A sum-

mary has been made of stupendous results which cluster in that very brief period making a bright spot in history. It is claimed that in the year 1858 access was given for mission purposes to more than 1,000,000,000 people.

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In 1858 after 200 years of exclusion a treaty was made with Japan by Great Britain which opened that country to the Gospel, and the intervening history is like a romance.

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In 1858 the treaty of Tientsin threw open Chinese ports and the interior, and provided that any subject of China might embrace the Christian faith without persecution.

In 1858 the interests of the East India Company were transferred to the British Crown and the hindrance to Mission effort removed, making it possible, also, that Mrs. Elizabeth Sale should penetrate the zenanas of Hindustan, and begin her work among the women.

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In 1858 changes took place in Europe by which the temporal power of the Pope was destroyed, and Italy began to be free.

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In 1858 David Livingstone sailed a second time for Africa to complete his explorations, giving its last continent to the world, like a

new copy-book in the hands of an adult scholar, that its history might be written for God, clean and beautiful.

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In 1858 Benito Juarez overthrew the monastic system in Mexico, confiscating its estates and revenues, thus opening the way for God's word to be given to the people of Central America without the embargo of papal restriction.*

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The time has come to go forward. The advance may be in almost any direction. The

* "The Greatest Work in the World," by Arthur T. Pierson, D.D.

way is open now. The mountain of difficult languages and dialects, that was upon one side, has been levelled by the labors of the various Bible Societies; upon the other side, like a mountain, was the refusal of heathen nations to permit the labor of missionaries, and that is gone. Then the superstition of subtle religions was more than a Red Sea in front. But that is now swept by breezes from the great ocean of Truth. It is ruffled and troubled. It rolls back, and the army of God, bearing its message, crosses and recrosses through its very depth.

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Untold millions of money would soon be ready for Missions if the Christian Church

should do an extraordinary thing worthy of its faith,—if it should turn to the heathen world in earnest, and preach the Gospel to it as God wanted the Children of Israel to march to Canaan trusting Him to lead them. Nothing else would so quickly satisfy the discontent of the world, seething for revolution, as an act of supreme faith turning all eyes to God, and making plain our faith that He is about to rule in mens' hearts. Nothing else would so certainly merge denominations, as a thing greater than churches. Nothing else would so overtop the questions of minute Biblical criticism, and insignificant scholarly differences, and put them where they belong, as the practical application of the great self-evident truths of God's word. Nothing else

would so happily relieve the congested fortunes of the world, as some new way of spending money for God that would justify itself. Where can rich men spend their excessive millions today that it will not pall upon them, and satiate their true soul, almost as sickeningly, as the silly purchase of diamonds? It is as difficult to find a college that would justify a great gift, as it is to find a new investment without forming a trust. Colleges and hospitals get the money, when a man must give it away, because that seems the best place to drop it, when the rich are in a hurry, and must put it somewhere, but colleges and hospitals are already so in excess of the real demand for them, that they enter into dignified competition for students and patients. Gen-

erosity is becoming surfeited at home. The soul of the world is hungry for a great honest opportunity to do good, that will satisfy itself toward God, and use the money it gets, and the tremendous energy it develops in business. It is impossible, for the nature that has acquired magnitude by the control of great enterprises, to fool itself by puttering. It may do nothing and die disappointed, and perhaps be lost; but it will not make a hypocrite of its own brain. It knows when the Church is praying and crying into the air. Why should the enterprise of organized Christianity mince at a dark continent, or at the fact that 1,000,000,000 people have never had a chance, when the business courage of the same men plans straight to the issue in any-

thing it wants to do? The intelligence and push that has created the Chicago Exposition would soon evangelize the world, if men and women could be found who believe in God, as these people believe in their city. They have built their beautiful, wonderful, new "White City" in Jackson Park, on the shore of Lake Michigan, the quickest and most astounding expression of enterprise in human history. May someone in a quiet hour stand aside, looking toward the blue dome that so softly and kindly covers it all, easily lit with sunlight by day, and splendidly sprinkled with stars by night, and feel come in upon him an inspiration of the greater White City, out of which our Saviour came, that the Gospel of its life might be preached in all this

world *to every creature!* Perhaps the faith that conceived, and the energy that built this "White City" may be latent there, and men and women shall be stirred by it to like enterprise for God.

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Everything may be wrong with a nation, or a world that disobeys God; everything may come right when there is obedience. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" may be the command, which obeyed, would open the way for our whole race happily, and prosperously into the future. Disobedience to it may now be culminating, and may set astray, and into confusion, strife, and war all questions of govern-

ment, social order, and spiritual peace. The position of our earth toward the sun causes the ice and snow during the winter to creep from the poles far down into the temperate zone, then comes the terrific war of storm and tornado, by which, the sun in the spring conquers. We cannot turn the poles to the sun, and make the whole earth warm and fruitful, thus destroying in some degree the cause of storms; but what we cannot do with this vast earth we can do with its men and women, and especially its children. We can turn their soul to a sun warmer than the natural sun. It is possible to thaw the great frozen realm of benighted human nature into love, out of which, in time, will come intelligence, good government, fairness, and peace.

The world is now all open, and nobody can ever again close it. Not only is it open so that people of any nation may travel and live where they choose; but it is also open so that any man or woman may think freely and independently upon all questions. The universal franchise has come, whether for good or ill, and no thrones can stay it, so that government must soon go into the hands of that class which is most numerous. Possibly, too, the hour of God's extremity has come, and the neglected nations and people are coming to us, mingling with us, and taking for themselves that which in eighteen centuries we have failed to give them. If so, we are on the verge of new things,—social storms, more terrific than we have yet seen,—tornadoes,

from the conflicting interests of people differing widely, and suddenly brought together upon terms of equal political privilege. If the people are sovereign they will rule by their numbers, in their own way, so that their royalty shall not be shamed, or starved. Love will in time prevail, truth must conquer, light will crowd away darkness; but it will be the evolution of truth forcing its way, it will be darkness taking light for itself, error truth, hatred love, not the mission of Jesus who came out of heaven, and *gave* heaven to earth, intending those who first received it to *give* it to others. We have not given it to the teeming untaught millions, and so, in trying to keep it, have but narrowly and barrenly had it ourselves. What if it be true that we are circling

about in a sort of spiritual wilderness, greedily developing it, building homes and lavish churches, suffering littleness, fatigue, spiritual atrophy, and death, when straight, blind obedience, on the basis of our general faith in God, would be Canaan, with wealth of soul, a self-evident answer to scepticism, a sign plainer than sermons, or books, that we are His people, strong always in Him, and enviable in His blessings! Certain it is that light has not in the past sufficiently gone to darkness. It has kept its light and tried vainly to brighten it. Now, by emigration, the activity of the press, freedom of speech, the organization of labor, the overwhelming vote of numbers, darkness is coming in upon light and demanding it. The world is coming for its

"pearl of great price." It will crowd up through our civilization, upsetting and overturning our comfort, taking it from us, and slowly, stormily, disastrously getting its due—its kingdom of heaven long established upon earth, but never preached to all the world.

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Is it too late? No! Repentance, the reversal of wrong courses, looking with a "single eye" to the command of God, and obeying it in faith is always the safest and best way into the future. We are never wise enough to make it safe to go on in any other way than by faith. Who can take clearly into his mind all the ten thousand great history making

forces of any period, and project them into the future, making out of human judgment alone a safe way? Who in this age of quickly moving currents of opinion — this age of emotion, and deep sense of bitter wrongs, can say boldly enough which is the way, unless he speak in the confidence of God's great purposes? Obedience to God alone can restfully assure us of the intricate future looming up from the darkness, and hoarse with voices shouting the desire of untaught hearts. Great statesmen have been equal to lesser times; but the world is seething now and needs one wise, strong government. It has been said that "the government of the people for the people and by the people would be the worst form of government for a great prison or a lunatic

asylum; but for good people it is the best." The times have come when the world must be good to rule itself, when Jesus Christ must be King and all the people know the meaning of His just, generous, and loving sovereignty.

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But an actual Mission Exodus — is it possible? Is it not radical, irregular, absurd, fanatical? What would it be if the parent source of our civilization should start it and guide it? What would it be if conceived on such a scale as to quicken into apostolic vigor the limp Christian faith of the world? What would it be if the spirit that hurries men to die in battle for their country should be caught

by the majesty of a holy purpose, and filled with a loving intention to quickly establish the kingdom of heaven in all this earth? What would it be if God's wisdom in organization, and genius in command should find His men, and set them aflame with the conception of a universal spiritual nation? The world always needs a sensation; let it have one that is good—a sensation large enough to justify itself, so decidedly right that it will need no answer to anybody but the fact that God is in it.

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Suppose the overcrowded, intense, Christian world, now crying to God in beautiful but hopeless repetition, should "move forward"

among the people who have not heard of Christ, would they be doing for God anything more self-sacrificing than many are doing for wealth, sight-seeing, sport and glory? If even vast armies of people should offer to live or die, in order that the Gospel might at once be made known everywhere, would life be for them more of a struggle than it is now for millions of good people? Are not the masses of people jammed together, and trampling upon each other, getting hard and bitter; and all just to live a little more narrowly every year? What would be the effect if employment were given among the overcrowded by letting many go, by helping to send them to level up the sunken two-thirds of the human race? Might not the machinery and business of the world still run?

These men and women would need to live wherever they might go. They would themselves need food, clothing, and homes, and every man, woman, and child whom they might start to better things by the truth, would soon begin to eat, drink, and wear at greater cost, and live in buildings requiring more labor than a hut. What might come about if the great Westward laden steamers could be laden Eastward? Perhaps this may yet be found to be the solution of the knotty problems sweating the brain of political and social economists. Would it not be a worthy nineteenth century phenomenon, if the civilized, good living part of the world should get busy, and happy levelling up its vast mental and spiritual lowlands. Then might Shakespeare's Scripture

philosophy be practically realized in the joy of mercy,

"The quality of mercy is not strained,—
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath ; it is twice blessed,—
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown."

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Where is the hindrance ? Not among those who should go to the heathen. Many thousands are ready, waiting to go. The Christian young people of this age tremble with a desire to do everything for God. Their eagerness and helplessness are sometimes nearly misery. Let the Churches become the great federal nation, and unitedly call for their hundreds and thou-

sands more and more, and they will come. The world needs a great movement for God — a peaceable war. This would stir our dull pulses. Some clarion notes from a Mission bugle well sounded, caught up and sent on, might get a rally that would in a few years make most unexpected history.

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The hindrance does not lie in the unwillingness of people to give money. The prophetic remark was recently made in a hasty speech in New York City that "very soon rich men would hustle each other to do good." Just now for the most part rich men are little boys chasing butterflies for pleasure. But capital could learn that it cannot always be a

minor ; nor can it be an absentee landlord very much longer with other people so deeply in earnest. It cannot always go hunting clear skies and balmy air; it cannot forever sail round the world in steam yachts, and go coaching through the bloom of hawthorn hedges and the perfume of English roses. The capitalist is not yet an angel, and cannot expect to float always in sunshine, till he gets out of this world, thronging with weary, sick, ignorant and heavily plodding human clay. If any millionaire were to strip himself of his surfeit of wealth, and quicken all the richer, purer, warmer activities of his being by dispatching a steamer load of missionaries—by diverting to this traffic the newest and quickest of the ocean fleet—by turning over his luxurious steam yacht to

making Jesus king, and do it with a clear eye and strong faith he would sleep more soundly, possess a healthier appetite, get more hours of sweet temper, find the sun kinder in the heavens, and every star brighter. This world is created, and human nature is created that Jesus Christ should be King; he who aids that Sovereignty starts thought, imagination, and emotions that emancipate from dullness, and futile things, giving instead, infinite joyous liberty.

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The hindrance lies in the fact that the church is so busy with itself. It lies in the need of a man. It lies in the fact that we do not see that in trying always to lift ourselves we do not get any higher.

A very prosperous church which had set itself to accomplish something for *itself* succeeded. The question was then asked: "What shall we do next?" The suggestion was made: "Aim to be distinctively good." "Make a study of the spirit of Christ, and seek to possess it eminently." "Pioneer a movement to realize in the fullest possible sense the experience, and the conditions of the kingdom of heaven in a church, and in a city." Somebody, somewhere, must aid a sample church to rise up in the strength of the real purpose of Christ, and gird itself to stay strong in *goodness*, until without bill-boards and drums, people will know of it, and run to it. There must yet be the possibility of apostolic simplicity and joy — that thing, which, with

all their privation, was enough for the early Christians, and was still sweet when their cup was mingled to the brim with bitterness. There is a paradox in human nature, the meaning of which we have not yet learned. It is possible to so try to save our life that, by the very selfishness of the effort, we utterly lose it. It is possible to magnanimously give it away, and by so doing, get it more fully and happily than it can be had in any other way. At Christmas time, for about a week, human nature does seem to get upon the right track, bubbling up and rejoicing in the very joy of its self-denial. Can it be that we get the pleasures of Christmas because we blunder upon a natural law of happiness deep seated in our being? At Christmas time nearly everybody

reverses himself, and gives something to somebody else. The pocket-book is counted over and over again, and the bank account is strained to its utmost to do all that is in our heart for others. Faces shine because of it, and people who are never happy in that way at any other time, get happy in making others happy. But how soon we blunder down again into the mean old ways of selfishness, and suffer along through the commonplaces of the year.

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At the Christmas time of 1892, a student of human nature tried to make a study of emotions where very rich people were buying costly presents for each other. He made many

visits to the famous establishments upon Broadway, and upon Fifth Avenue in New York City, during the busy hours, to see if any joy could come into the faces made inexpressive, hard, and leathery by mere money getting, and its gross self-indulgent use. The conclusion was: that while it was almost impossible to utterly destroy human nature, it could be wonderfully mummified about some souls. With marvellous accuracy has God created all through human nature a system of compensation, by which they who selfishly try to save their life all the year, lose it, even at Christmas time. The happy faces of last Christmas, in New York, were those of the people who took time to personally bless others, and the purchases were not always made in the best

equipped places of businesss. There was dancing delight in some cases where a group of father, mother, and two or three entranced children got out together, to merely look in the windows, buy some warm clothing for Christmas presents, and a few toys and candies for Santa Claus. Let anyone who wishes to see some laws of heaven and hell, working their course on earth, study the problem at his next opportunity. Selfishness loses life; generosity finds it.

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The most striking phenomenon of joy in living is to be found among those young people who have reached the elevation, by which they rapturously offer for the foreign mission

field, making of themselves as complete a gift to Christ as possible. They do not lose. They get a higher Christmas joy. They give themselves, and get themselves in return many fold.

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It is inconceivable, that the religion which has all its meaning in the life and death of Jesus Christ, can prosper, while living out the mistake of trying to fatten on itself. It is busy creating a market for the most costly sermons out of the finest brains. It is pressing for its satisfaction through artistic refinement in worship, and starving to spiritual death. It is gross with wealth at home, luxurious in its life to obesity, self-indulgent in

the emotions its seeks on Sunday; and no decent attempt yet made to do its first work.

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"Keep the money at home—keep missionaries at home, that they may save our own heathen." Do the work at home by all means. Do it in the best way. Do it while doing the other. Do it out of the generosity and richness of nature that the other will create. There is no other method that will succeed. We shall never be good enough to make the world about us much better, until we get better by obedience. There is not any power of the human intellect, nor any approach of man to man, that will very greatly change the average proportion of professedly saved people to the

unsaved among us, until the conception of the kingdom of God on earth gets clearer, and has the vigor to obey the first law of its existence.

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There must be a great Exodus of the Christian world in men, women, money, and spirit to the heathen world. Nothing, but the Gospel wrought into the life of the people, will save us from the dangerous ferment beginning in the vast under-section of the human race, and no dapper kid-glove preaching will do it. It cannot get attention. The first work of the Gospel must be done with the discipline and overwhelming persistence of a military movement. Somebody must get in earnest. Who-

ever may stay at home, and keep house in the Church, many must go where Christ has always pointed the way, saying, with a voice so imperious that it has never changed in eighteen hundred years: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

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We must go. The Christian world must give up its sons and its daughters in a vast emigration — in soldiers to a peaceable war — in a Mission Exodus. The time has quite come to beat the sword into a plowshare, and the spear into a pruning hook. This age has the imagination, the courage, and the faith, if applied in the right direction, to grasp the mighty

contents of prophesy, and hurry its fulfilment, thus quickly bringing on its blessings. God is willing that something should be done for Him on a scale as magnificent as for war or international display. The Christian nations are well equipped with ships for destruction, and tremendous engines of war. Let them find real service in standing guard for a few years, before disarmament, while under the flags of an alliance, triple, quadruple, or multiplied, as it may be, the work of making Jesus King go on. Let the Church of Christ drop its differences, and bury them to the centre of the earth; then unite to do this thing, and all the world will be in the movement. The world will stop to see it done if it be undertaken worthily. The angels will

again throng the skies with their song: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men." From heaven itself mighty, unseen forces will move to help on the work of crowning Jesus King of Kings.

May there not be found somewhere *a man*, who will be as great for God, as Napoleon Bonaparte in war, as statesmen have sometimes been for their country, as many now are for the simple purpose of making money?

THE END.